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FURTHER REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS ANGOLA VERIFICATION MISSION (UNAVEM II)

INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted in response to paragraph 21 of Security Council resolution 851 (1993) of 15 July 1993, by which the Council requested the Secretary-General to submit to it as soon as the situation warranted, and in any case before 15 September 1993, a report on the situation in Angola with his recommendation for the further role of the United Nations in the peace process and, in the meantime, to keep the Council regularly informed of developments. Since the adoption of that resolution, the Council has been kept regularly informed of developments in the Angolan situation. The present report covers the period up to 10 September 1993.

I. POLITICAL AND MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

2. Since my last report to the Security Council, dated 12 July 1993 (S/26060) and despite intensified international efforts to steer the peace process back on track, the grave situation in Angola has worsened further and has become particularly tragic in the humanitarian domain. Despite diplomatic efforts, agreement on the implementation of the "Acordos de Paz" and on the long-awaited cease-fire continued to be elusive. Instead, fierce fighting has continued and, in many respects, has intensified throughout the country. The offensive of the preceding months by the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) has continued, resulting in significant advances throughout the month of July.

3. However, since early August, the Government has embarked on a counter-offensive which has resulted in UNITA being removed from several places it had held before. The Government has succeeded in broadening its area of control and perimeter of defence around several besieged cities, with the exception of Kuito/Bié. The Government appears to have acquired additional military equipment and has conscripted additional forces.

4. On 2 August 1993, the Government launched a major offensive against Huambo, Angola's second-largest city, which UNITA had captured in March. The attacks were supported by intensive air bombardments. While these bombardments appeared

to subside somewhat towards the latter half of August, Government troops have sustained the main thrust of their offensive.

5. The most ferocious fighting is still concentrated around the provincial capitals of Kuito/Bié and Menongue, respectively, which have been besieged by UNITA for more than eight months. The intensity of the fighting around Kuito/Bié has been particularly heavy, resulting in a great loss of human lives, a very high number of wounded who cannot be treated, a total lack of essential means of survival (food, water, medicines) and massive destruction of basic infrastructure.

6. Despite repeated reaffirmations by both the Government and UNITA of their readiness to resume negotiations, thus far no progress has been made in this regard. The deep mutual mistrust in the face of intensifying fighting has hindered peace efforts, as each side views the other's proposals with scepticism. On 11 August, Dr. Savimbi, in an interview with Agence France-Presse, proposed an "immediate cease-fire without preconditions". Subsequently, on 13 August, the UNITA representative in New York wrote to the President of the Security Council, informing her of Dr. Savimbi's position. In his letter, the UNITA representative stated, inter alia, that the said initiative, if accepted by the Government of Angola, would facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance and put a halt to the bombing of Huambo and other areas. Reiterating its position that it is prepared to resume serious dialogue, the Government asserted that it could not seriously consider UNITA's initiative, especially since the proposal had neither been communicated officially to the Government nor to my Special Representative. This notwithstanding, the Government has continued to reaffirm its willingness to resume negotiations with UNITA if the latter agrees in advance to accept, in writing, the principles contained in the draft Abidjan Protocol.

7. On 20 August, my Special Representative, Mr. Alioune Blondin Beye, received an oral message from Dr. Savimbi, delivered through the special envoy of President Mobutu of Zaire, in which Dr. Savimbi reiterated his call for an "immediate cease-fire without preconditions". Mr. Beye, in response, reiterated his wish to meet with Dr. Savimbi in order to obtain additional information concerning UNITA's proposal and drew his attention, in this respect, to the relevant provisions of the Security Council resolutions on Angola, as well as to the need to respect the Bicesse Accords and to accept the results of the elections. However, my Special Representative has, to date, been unable to meet with Dr. Savimbi personally, as his repeated requests since 2 August 1993 to go to Huambo have been declined owing to the continuing hostilities there.

8. Meanwhile, the international community has persevered in its efforts to contribute constructively towards a peaceful resolution of the Angolan crisis. Among the various peace endeavours currently under way, two are particularly noteworthy. One seeks to convene a meeting between President José Eduardo dos Santos of Angola and Dr. Savimbi under the auspices of King Hassan of Morocco, President Houphouët-Boigny of Côte d'Ivoire and Mr. Nelson Mandela, President of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC); and the other involves efforts of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Ad Hoc Committee on Southern Africa headed by President Mugabe of Zimbabwe (who is also the Chairman of the Front-line States) to meet with Dr. Savimbi, who had earlier indicated his readiness to receive the members of the OAU Ad Hoc

Committee at Huambo, the suggested venue of which was unacceptable to the Committee.

9. For his part, my Special Representative, has, in the past two months, pursued intensive consultations with all interested parties with a view to relaunching the peace process. To this end he has, at the national level, continued to maintain regular contacts with the Government of Angola and, prior to the commencement of the aerial bombardments of Huambo, also directly with the UNITA leadership. My Special Representative has also held regular meetings with representatives of the three observer States (Portugal, the Russian Federation and the United States of America), with the diplomatic community based in Luanda, and has continued his contacts with representatives of all other sectors of Angolan civilian society: political parties, social and religious organizations as well as prominent Angolan personalities, including UNITA officials currently living "under protection" in Luanda.

10. On 19 August 1993, during the most recent meeting with my Special Representative, President dos Santos expressed his support and appreciation of UNAVEM's humanitarian as well as mediation efforts, particularly as regards my Special Representative's strategy of holding consultations in the subregion with a view to re-initiating the peace process in Angola. The possibility of deploying peace-keeping forces within the context of a local cease-fire in Kuito/Bié, Malange and Menongue, as tentatively foreseen under the proposal for humanitarian assistance operations, was also thoroughly discussed. In this connection, the President confirmed the Government's position that the deployment of United Nations peace-keeping forces in Angola should take place only in the context of a global cease-fire within the framework of the Abidjan Protocol.

11. In view of the special role which the heads of State of the neighbouring and other countries on the continent played at various stages in the search for a peaceful solution, my Special Representative has undertaken intensive consultations in Namibia, Zaire, Zimbabwe, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe, Congo and Zambia.

12. President Nujoma of Namibia informed my Special Representative during his visit to Namibia that his invitation to Dr. Savimbi to visit Namibia continued to be valid. President Nujoma and Mr. Beye also discussed the strategy aimed at relaunching definitive peace negotiations through preliminary exploratory talks. The question of Angolan refugees in Namibia was also dealt with.

13. President Mobutu, for his part, assured my Special Representative of his willingness to cooperate towards finding a solution to the Angolan crisis. He informed Mr. Beye that, in order to improve bilateral relations between the two countries, he would dispatch a special envoy to President dos Santos and furthermore propose that the joint Angola/Zaire Military and Security Commission be reactivated. Specific ideas in connection with the relaunching of the peace process were also discussed. Later, a special envoy from Zaire met with Mr. Beye at Luanda, and they also met subsequently at Kinshasa on 8 September 1993.

14. My Special Representative's consultations in Harare confirmed that President Mugabe, who is also the Chairman of the front-line States and also

Chairman of the OAU Ad Hoc Committee on Southern Africa, was keenly interested in the preparation and coordination of efforts aimed at resolving the Angolan crisis. President Mugabe has reaffirmed his interest in convening a joint OAU/United Nations meeting with Dr. Savimbi at Luanda or outside Angola, to persuade the UNITA leader to cease hostilities and resume dialogue. President Mugabe also pointed out that he would be prepared to meet Dr. Savimbi in Libreville, Gabon, and encouraged my Special Representative to pursue efforts to that end.

15. During my Special Representative's discussions in Gabon with that country's President Bongo, the President expressed his strong conviction that the pursuit of a military solution in Angola should be strongly discouraged. He welcomed and fully supported the United Nations efforts and offered Libreville as a venue for a possible meeting with Dr. Savimbi. In subsequent meetings with Gabonese officials, the modalities and practical arrangements for such a meeting were elaborated.

16. In the consultations my Special Representative had with President Trovoada of Sao Tome and Principe, the President confirmed to Mr. Beye his readiness to assist in relaunching the peace process and, to that end, to take appropriate action by offering the use of facilities for the holding of exploratory contacts between the Government of Angola and UNITA.

17. With regard to this initiative, I have maintained regular contact with the Government of Angola and UNITA to impress upon them the need to resume the dialogue, to re-initiate the peace process and to establish an effective cease-fire. In this connection, in several telephone conversations with Dr. Savimbi I strongly urged the UNITA leader to meet with my Special Representative in Sao Tome and Principe in order to hold exploratory discussions on the resumption of the peace process. The President of Sao Tome and Principe had expressed earlier to me his support for the holding of such a meeting at São Tomé.

18. On 3 September 1993, the Permanent Committee of the Political Commission of UNITA issued a communiqué which, in particular, made known its readiness to send its high-ranking delegations to meet with President Trovoada and the President of Portugal, Mr. Mário Soares. In that document, the President of UNITA also reiterated his offer to immediately suspend military hostilities without preconditions.

19. The Government of Angola, in a statement issued on 4 September 1993, supported the initiatives of my Special Representative but stated that a cease-fire should be established in strict accordance with the Bicesse Accords and relevant resolutions of the Security Council, and that it did not believe that the offer in UNITA's communiqué had been made within such a context. Finally, on 9 September 1993, UNITA announced that the security situation in Huambo precluded Dr. Savimbi from travelling out of the country to meet with Mr. Beye. Instead, a high-level UNITA delegation, currently travelling outside the country, was mandated to attend a "summit" in Libreville. With respect to the meeting envisaged between Dr. Savimbi and a number of heads of State of African countries, I contacted concerned African leaders in the first week of September, including the Presidents of Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire and Sao Tome and Principe, in order to support the proposal for such a meeting. I also established contact with the Prime Minister of Portugal on this matter.

II. HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

20. With the further intensification of the fighting, the humanitarian situation has worsened dramatically. The humanitarian dimensions of the Angolan tragedy are catastrophic as some 3 million people, particularly the most vulnerable population groups - children, women and the elderly - are suffering from the consequences of the conflict. It is widely estimated that more than 1,000 persons die every day from the direct or indirect effects of the war, the highest fatality rate of any conflict in the world.

21. Since the resumption of the civil conflict in Angola, the United Nations system has made intensive efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to all Angolans in need. In the coastal provinces and other areas considered secure, the relief programme initiated by the United Nations, in cooperation with national and international non-governmental organizations, has brought food aid and other emergency assistance to large numbers of Angolans displaced by the war or affected by the country-wide economic decline. However, the implementation of relief operations in the interior of the country and in zones of active conflict, where the needs are particularly acute, has encountered serious difficulties. Since my last report (S/26060), and following several rounds of negotiations between the United Nations and the Government of Angola and between the United Nations and UNITA, agreement was reached on 7 July 1993 to resume, for an initial period of 10 days, the emergency relief plan which had been suspended on 21 June 1993. Relief flights to agreed locations were accordingly relaunched on 15 July 1993, with the necessary security guarantees having been obtained from the Government and UNITA.

22. On 15 July 1993, the flights scheduled for Luena and Mavinga/Jamba took place first without difficulties. The flight scheduled for the long-besieged city of Kuito/Bié had to be cancelled, upon UNITA's request, during a stopover in Huambo. An incident occurred, however, with respect to the flight to M'Banza Congo, which is currently under UNITA control. As the aircraft prepared to land, it was struck by several bullets. Fortunately, no one was injured and the plane was able to return to its base. My Special Representative vigorously deplored the incident and requested UNITA to submit a report on the circumstances that had led to that incident. United Nations humanitarian flights to areas considered unsafe were suspended until receipt of UNITA's report. UNITA presented its report to my Special Representative on 20 July 1993, acknowledging responsibility for the incident and attributing the causes thereof to a breakdown of its communications system.

23. Since the M'Banza Congo incident, the United Nations has nevertheless continued providing humanitarian assistance to the areas considered to be safe and has elaborated a proposal for a new twofold emergency relief plan. The new plan covers areas where no active conflict was going on but which still were considered unsafe, as well as areas of active conflict. The Government, in its letter of 29 July 1993, informed my Special Representative that it approved the relaunching of humanitarian operations and, regarding Kuito/Bié, Malange and Menongue, proposed the establishment of a local cease-fire of unlimited duration, within a 15-kilometre neutral zone around these cities. It also proposed that such a cease-fire be monitored and verified by the United Nations to ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the areas concerned. My

Special Representative's subsequent efforts to discuss this emergency relief plan with UNITA were hampered by the fact that, as a result of aerial bombardments of Huambo, it was not possible for the United Nations team to travel to that city. My Special Representative, therefore, conveyed the United Nations proposal to UNITA through its offices abroad. Also, during my Special Representative's visit to Zaire on 10 August 1993, a copy of this proposal was handed to a UNITA emissary.

24. Meanwhile, in view of the delay in obtaining the required approval of the above-mentioned proposal, an alternative arrangement was being developed in cooperation with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and religious institutions to ensure that humanitarian assistance would be provided to at least part of the population. Under this arrangement, starting on 17 August 1993, NGOs, using their own logistic facilities but with support from United Nations programmes and agencies (including the provision of supplies), have delivered vital humanitarian assistance to several areas outside active military conflict.

25. While in Zimbabwe, my Special Representative received, on 22 August 1993, a message from General Gato, UNITA's Deputy Secretary for Foreign Affairs, indicating that he would like the United Nations delegation to come to Kinshasa for discussions on humanitarian assistance. The next day, a United Nations team led by the interim director of the Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit (UCAH) and including representatives of UNAVEM II, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Food Programme (WFP) met with a UNITA delegation in Zaire. During that meeting, the UNITA representative reaffirmed UNITA's commitment to the emergency relief programme signed with the United Nations on 7 July 1993 and promised that a response to the twofold emergency relief plan would be submitted to my Special Representative by 27 August 1993. A positive reply from UNITA was received by my Special Representative only on the evening of Friday, 3 September 1993, in response to which the United Nations is planning to relaunch humanitarian assistance operations to the nine cities located in both Government-controlled and UNITA-controlled areas where no active conflict is under way.

26. On 26 August 1993, another deplorable incident occurred at Catengue, Benguela Province, in connection with a WFP convoy of 75 trucks which was transporting relief aid to some 145,000 war-affected people in Caimbambo and Cubal. Three trucks in that convoy were attacked, resulting in the death of four members of the convoy and the injury of another. One vehicle was completely destroyed and two partially damaged. My Special Representative strongly condemned this inhumane and unjustified act and immediately requested a thorough investigation of the circumstances of the attack, which is in violation of the elementary rules of international humanitarian law and poses a serious obstacle to the implementation of United Nations humanitarian assistance operations in Angola.

III. SITUATION OF UNAVEM II

27. As indicated in paragraph 15 of my report of 12 July 1993 (S/26060), I had, in conformity with paragraph 1 of Security Council resolution 834 (1993), reduced the size of UNAVEM II. The total staff of UNAVEM II currently comprises 43 international civilian staff, 50 military observers, 18 police observers, 11 military paramedics, as well as 75 local staff. UNAVEM II military and police staff continue to be deployed at five locations (Luanda, Lubango, Namibe, Benguela and Sumbe), where these observers are engaged in patrolling the areas, maintaining liaison with the respective local authorities, rendering support to humanitarian assistance operations, conducting investigations and other activities. The presence of the United Nations military, police and civilian personnel continues to be an important factor in the efforts aimed at establishing peace in Angola.

28. Experience on the ground, especially with the recent intensification of UNAVEM II's mediation and good offices activities, has shown that the present number of international civil staff is seriously inadequate to carry out effectively the various tasks required under UNAVEM II's mandate, especially that of mediation and good offices. To adequately meet the requirements of UNAVEM II's mandate, there is an urgent need to restore the level of international civilian staff to at least what it was in April-May 1993, i.e., 59. There is also a need to improve and upgrade UNAVEM II's current voice and fax communications capabilities. The financial implications of these additional requirements will be reflected in a addendum to the present report.

29. Angola still remains at phase III security status. However, due to the relatively calm situation in certain parts of the country, including Luanda, my Special Representative, in consultation with the United Nations agencies operating in Angola, has now recommended that the security phase in Luanda be downgraded to phase II but at the same time that phase III be maintained in other parts of Angola. For UNAVEM II, Angola continues to remain a non-family duty station. With regard to plans for the eventual sea/air evacuation of the staff from Angola, should the need arise, the arrangements indicated in my previous report (S/26060) are still in place. In this connection, on 29 July 1993, my Special Representative, in collaboration with the other United Nations agencies operating in Angola, formulated a plan containing detailed security and evacuation procedures and guidelines.

IV. OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

30. I remain deeply distressed over the tragic situation that continues to haunt Angola, and in particular over the extensive suffering that has been inflicted on its people during the recent months of fratricidal war. I am particularly disturbed by the fact that, despite the tragedy the Angolans are currently facing, and despite the constant efforts of the United Nations and the international community, the fighting has not only continued but has intensified, and to date peace negotiations have not been resumed. Moreover, new impediments have been put in the way of the international community's efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to the Angolan population. It has become obvious that additional measures should be taken to ensure that humanitarian assistance will reach the needy population throughout the country.

31. It is evident that an effective and lasting peace cannot be achieved through military force, and that this war only prolongs the suffering of the Angolan people and exacerbates the destruction of the country. I therefore strongly urge that the Government and UNITA return to the negotiating table without delay, in order to agree on an immediate cease-fire, in accordance with the provisions of the Bicesse Accords and the understandings reached at Abidjan, which will also allow for the distribution of desperately needed humanitarian assistance.

32. I welcome the international community's growing efforts, especially those made by the OAU Ad Hoc Committee on Southern Africa, the heads of State of neighbouring countries and the three observer States, in support of the search for a peaceful resolution to the Angolan conflict, and urge them to continue in these efforts.

33. The concrete initiatives already undertaken by my Special Representative and his staff in carrying out UNAVEM's mandate of mediation and good offices aimed at restoring peace in Angola have been encouraging. UNAVEM II has proven to be a useful channel for communication between the Government and UNITA and thus an essential factor in the United Nations efforts to facilitate the resumption of negotiations to advance the peace process, as well as to support vital humanitarian assistance activities in the country. In the present circumstances, I see no alternative but to recommend to the Security Council that the mandate of UNAVEM II be extended for a period of three months. Such an extension would allow the United Nations to continue its mediation efforts and good offices activities and to build upon the achievements of initiatives already undertaken, especially at a time when the peace process appears to have gained some momentum. The cost estimates for the extension of the mandate of UNAVEM II will be presented in an addendum to the present report.

34. I would also recommend to the Security Council to confirm its readiness to take prompt action to expand substantially the United Nations presence in Angola, in the event that significant progress is made in the peace process.

35. UNAVEM II personnel have continued to serve with exemplary dedication. I would like to pay tribute to them, and in particular, to my Special Representative, Mr. Alioune Blondin Beye, and to Major-General Chris Abutu Garuba (Nigeria), for carrying out their very difficult assignment with determination.